

Remarks Following a Roundtable Discussion on Housing Counseling in North Little Rock, Arkansas

July 1, 2008

Thank you all for having us. We're here at the Family Service Agency here in Little Rock to discuss ways to help people either buy a home for the first time or stay in a home.

Before—I want to—before I say a few words about how the Government can help people stay in their home, I do want to thank Charles and your team of counselors who are here. Thank you for your briefing. I thought it was very thorough and understandable.

I do want to thank the Secretary of HUD for joining us, as well as Congressman Boozman. I really appreciate your time.

And I want to thank Caroline [Carolyn],* first-time homebuyer—or, she went to the first-time homebuyers program in Jacksonville, Arkansas—and Patty from Conway, Arkansas.

One of the problems we have when it comes to buying a home is that there's a lot of fine print, and people get worried about it. And so these counselors have helped simplify the process. And one of the great challenges now is how to help creditworthy people stay in their homes, because we got some people who are—just with some little help, some advice, and some counseling will be able to figure out a way to stay in the home. It's in our national interest we do so. That's what Patty bought—she was—had a home and was very worried about being able to stay in it; got some good advice through Sue and—now in the home.

And this has happened all across America, by the way. There's some good pro-

grams coming out of Washington, all aimed at saying to the American citizen, if you are worried about staying in your home, contact a counseling service, we'll help you—"we" being the collective group of people that are in this business. After all, this is a HUD-funded counseling program; you receive some money from HUD for your counseling.

Congress can help, when they come back, to pass a good piece of housing legislation that modernizes the FHA and reforms the—these GSEs. And we—well, I think we can get us a bill, but it's going to require less politics and more focus on keeping our minds on who we need to help, and that's the homeowner.

And so I do want to thank you very much for having us. This is an issue on people's minds. It's an issue where there is good help to be had. And so if people are looking for help here in Arkansas, it's a good place to turn to—family services. And there are other places around the country where people can get help, where there's experts that will help them refinance their mortgages or work with their mortgage companies to help you stay in their homes. It's in our interest that more people stay in their homes during this period of uncertainty.

I'm confident, in the long run, America's going to be just fine. We're a country that has overcome challenges before. And we've got some challenges—high gasoline prices; we've got some challenges in the housing industry. We know the way forward in housing: good legislation and helping people stay in their homes. And the truth of the matter is, we know the way forward

* White House correction.

when it comes to energy. We're depending too much on energy from overseas. We ought to be finding more energy here at home. If people want their gasoline prices down, let's find energy here in America. And there's plenty of energy to be had.

At any rate, thank you all for your time. I enjoyed it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:48 p.m. at the Family Service Agency. In his remarks, he referred to Charles Deville, Jr., executive director, Family Service Agency; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Steven C. Preston; Carolyn Pierson, homeowner, Jacksonville, AR; Patty Couch, homeowner, Conway, AR; and Sue Pearson, budget, credit, and housing counselor, Consumer Credit Counseling Service, Family Service Agency.

Statement on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons *July 1, 2008*

Forty years ago today, the United States joined 61 other nations in signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Today, almost all nations are party to the treaty. The NPT represents a key legal barrier to nuclear weapons proliferation and makes a critical contribution to international security. I reaffirm the strong support of the United States for the treaty and our commitment to work diligently to strengthen it further.

NPT parties must take strong action to confront noncompliance with the treaty in order to preserve and strengthen its non-proliferation undertakings. We cannot allow nations to violate their commitments and undermine the NPT's fundamental role in advancing international security. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), through its safeguards system, plays a vital role in supporting the treaty by uncovering and reporting violations of nuclear safeguards. The United States is committed to ensuring the IAEA has the tools and access it needs to do its work, especially in support of universal adherence to the Additional Protocol.

The United States remains firmly committed to continued compliance with our

own obligations under the NPT. Our record demonstrates this commitment, including to the disarmament goals expressed in the preamble and Article VI of the treaty. Because of the nuclear reductions I have directed and the Moscow Treaty I signed with Russia, the U.S. nuclear weapon stockpile already has been reduced by half since I entered office and is at its smallest size since the 1950s.

The United States supports the global expansion of peaceful nuclear energy as a means of meeting growing energy demand and utilizing this zero-emission source of energy to help meet the challenge of climate change. This expansion of nuclear energy must be safe, secure, and not contribute to nuclear proliferation.

It is essential in these times of great challenges to the security of the international community, particularly when terrorists and state sponsors of terrorism seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction, that NPT parties work together to confront the dangers of nuclear proliferation. I call upon all parties to act promptly and effectively to meet these challenges and ensure that the treaty remains an effective instrument of global security.